



ST. LOUIS CONVENTION & VISITORS COMMISSION

One Metropolitan Square - Suite 1100 - St. Louis, MO 63102 - Visitor Information 800-916-0010 - (Fax) 314-421-0391 - visitorinfo@explorestlouis.com

FACT SHEET

Jefferson Barracks Historic Park

DESCRIPTION: Jefferson Barracks County Park (often called JB for short in St. Louis) is a county park perched on a scenic bluff overlooking the Mississippi River. Its past is steeped in American military history. Jefferson Barracks was established in 1826 as the major military installation west of the Mississippi at a time when the frontier was being settled. Many famous American military figures, including several presidents, served at the Barracks. The country's first "Infantry School of Practice" was established at Jefferson Barracks. Later, the Barracks was a major medical facility for the Union Army and a primary ordnance depot for Federal troops during the Civil War. During World Wars I and II, Jefferson Barracks was a major induction center for new Army recruits. It served as a major military installation until 1946. Near the county park, Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery, established in 1866 and once a part of the military installation, is the resting place for thousands of American veterans.

ADDRESS: 533 Grant Road (end of S. Broadway) St. Louis, MO 63125

LOCATION: South St. Louis County, 15 minutes south of Downtown St. Louis

PHONE: 314-544-5714

WEB SITE: www.stlouisco.com/parks/j-b.html

GETTING THERE: From Downtown St. Louis, take Broadway south several miles until ends. Jefferson Barracks is on the left.

HOURS: Tuesday-Friday, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Sunday, noon-4:30 p.m.; Monday, closed.

ADMISSION: Free

ANNUAL ATTENDANCE: 250,000

SIGNIFICANCE: Jefferson Barracks played a significant role in U. S. history for 120 years. Built in 1826, the Barracks served as the primary training and gathering place for the Army of the West. Prior to the Civil War, troops gathered at the post to provide protection to emigrants and merchants heading west, escorting travelers on the western trails and establishing and garrisoning frontier posts. During this time, almost every regiment in the Army was stationed at least in part at Jefferson Barracks. Later, during the Civil War, Jefferson Barracks served as a major medical facility and a primary ordnance depot for the Union Army. Many famous Americans served here including Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, William T. Sherman, Phillip Sheridan, Braxton Bragg, John J. Pershing and former presidents Zachary Taylor, Ulysses S. Grant and Dwight D. Eisenhower.

WHAT'S NEW: A second story is being added to the Visitors Center to give the park meeting

SUPERFUND RECORDS



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rooms and to return the building to its original appearance. It is expected the project will be completed by the end of 2001.

Jefferson Barracks County Park offers a variety of programs and classes for adults and children throughout the year. Recent new offerings include a fireworks display on the Fourth of July, hayride tours and "Oldies by the River," a concert series by bands playing music from the 50s, 60s and 70s.

HIGHLIGHTS: There are several buildings of historic note on the grounds of Jefferson Barracks County Park including:

- The Laborers House which was built in 1851 has been restored from original plans in the National Archives. The building was originally used by civilian workmen as the Ordnance Depot. Extensive archaeological excavations in the 1950s helped provide information about the original fittings for the house so that it could be restored to its appearance of 100 years earlier.
- The Stable, a unique building with a front and a back door so two horse teams could pull in simultaneously, was built in 1851. It housed four horses and two spring wagons used to haul munitions produced at the St. Louis Arsenal to the ordnance magazines in Jefferson Barracks.
- Powder Magazine Museum, built in 1857, is a massive stone building once used for the storage of rifles, cannons, gun powder and ammunition for troops stationed at the Barracks, in the Mississippi Valley and on the western frontier. The building has a beautiful patio overlooking the Mississippi River.
- The Old Ordnance Room was built in 1851 as the first of the powder magazines at the Barracks. It is now used for special exhibitions relating to the military history of the park.
- The Visitors Center was built in 1878 as a stable for four wagons and seven animals. Later, it was used to repair tanks and, later still, to house family visitors of new inductees.

Jefferson Barracks is the site of many special events during the year including military reenactments and muzzleloaders rendezvous.

ESPECIALLY FOR KIDS: The park runs several summer camps that focus on the Revolutionary and the Civil Wars as well as on World War II. Each July the park is the site of the Mighty Mud Mania Children's Festival which includes an obstacle course run in a mud pit and other theme areas.

ANNUAL SPECIAL EVENTS: Each summer Jefferson Barracks Park hosts the "Blues on the Mississippi" concert series.

HISTORY: Jefferson Barracks was built in 1826 to replace Fort Bellefontaine which had been built at the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers north of St. Louis in 1805. When Fort Bellefontaine suffered from the results of repeated flooding, the decision was made to establish another installation downriver which would also serve as the first Infantry School of

Practice in the United States. Jefferson Barracks was also to be the primary training and gathering place of the Army of the West.

The 1,702-acre site for the Barracks was given to the federal government by the village of Carondelet (now part of St. Louis city) to use as a military installation. The land had been part of the village's common fields but the residents decided a military post near their village would give them added protection and a ready market for their produce and other goods.

During its first months, the Barracks was called "Cantonment Adams" in honor of President John Quincy Adams, "Camp Miller" for the governor of Missouri and "Camp Barbour" for the Secretary of War. In October of 1826, it was decided to name the Barracks in honor of President Thomas Jefferson who had died on the Fourth of July of that year.

In 1829, troops from Jefferson Barracks provided the first armed escort for a merchant caravan on the Santa Fe Trail. Three years later, troops from Jefferson Barracks captured the Indian leader Blackhawk during the Blackhawk War. Lt. Jefferson Davis, later to be the president of the Confederacy, escorted the chief to the Barracks where he was interviewed by writer Washington Irving, and his portrait was painted by artist George Catlin.

The 1st regiment of the U.S. Dragoons, a precursor of the Cavalry, was formed at Jefferson Barracks for frontier service in 1833, and in 1837, the Barracks served as a rendezvous point for U.S. regulars and Missouri volunteers for the Seminole War in Florida. By 1843, the Barracks was the largest military post in the country. During 1846-48, a regiment of Mounted Riflemen was organized to protect travelers on the Oregon Trail but the troops were sent instead to the Mexican War. The Barracks served as staging posts for campaigns in that war.

Jefferson Barracks played a pivotal role for the Union in the Civil War. Troops from the Barracks raided the pro-secessionist Camp Jackson in St. Louis in 1861 saving the St. Louis Arsenal for the Union. The following year, Jefferson Barracks became a major medical center for troops wounded on the battlefield and the largest and most important Union facility in the country. In 1864, it was the assembly point for St. Louis' defense during Confederate General Sterling Price's raid. After the war, the Barracks cemetery was designated as a National Cemetery for deceased servicemen and later servicewomen.

The St. Louis Arsenal was closed in 1871, and all ordnance stored there was moved to Jefferson Barracks which became a cavalry training center in 1878.

In 1894, Jefferson Barracks once again became a regular military post - the barracks were rebuilt as the infantry returned, and two years later regular streetcar service was established from Jefferson Barracks to Downtown St. Louis.

In 1912, Albert Berry made the first successful parachute jump from an airplane onto a targeted area at Jefferson Barracks.

JB served as a rendezvous point for regulars and volunteers in the Spanish American War. The Barracks was the largest induction and demobilization center for troops headed to World War I fronts during 1917 and 1918. Several years later, Jefferson Barracks became the site of the Civilian Military Training Camp and during the 1930s, the Civilian Conservation Corps was established there.

During World War II, the 1st Army Air Corps Replacement and Training Center was established at Jefferson Barracks which also served as an induction and separation center, basic training camp and technical school for the Army Air Force. The Barracks was also a detention camp for Axis prisoners of war.

In 1943, one of the first units of the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (later called the Woman's Army Corps) was assigned to Jefferson Barracks to do clerical work to free men to do other assignments.

In 1946, the U. S. military closed Jefferson Barracks, and it was declared surplus property by the federal government. Four years later, the St. Louis County Department of Parks and Recreation acquired 135 acres of the old arsenal tract including several of the original buildings to develop into a historic park. Additional acquisitions over the years have increased the size of the park to 425 acres. Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery is preserved on its original site and is maintained by the federal government. Of the rest of the original 1,700-acre tract, some of the land was sold to private parties, and the Air National Guard utilizes part of it.

HANDICAPPED ACCESS: Most of the buildings at Jefferson Barracks County Park are handicapped accessible. Some historic buildings may not be handicapped accessible. Persons with disabilities are encouraged to call the park to find out what accommodations can be made.

WHERE TO GET LUNCH: There are several restaurants along Telegraph Avenue near the park.

GIFT SHOP: The park gift shop carries items pertaining to the military and the history of the area. The selection includes books, flags, posters, toy soldiers and collectible soldier figures. The shop is temporarily located in Laborers House while the Visitors Center is under construction.

WHAT'S NEARBY: Nearby are Sylvan Springs and Black Forest County Parks

PUBLIC RELATIONS CONTACT: John D. Magurany, director, 314-544-5790, jd-magurany@stlouisco.com

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